

## Catholic Education in Mexico 1525-1912

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IT is not easy to condense in a few pages all that the Catholic Church has done for the education and culture of the Mexican nation. We know of no one who has given a complete, concise account of the subject from the time of the Conquest up to the present day. It is not strange, therefore, in the absence of such a work, that so many errors on the matter should exist not only in other countries but even in the republic of Mexico, where certainly the glories of the country should be better known. Owing to the fact that we have a more extensive work in preparation in which all the historical proofs of this present paper will be presented, we will give only the general results of our investigation, without entering into the matter in detail.

In the first place, to avoid confusion, a distinction must be made between moral education and intellectual education—usually called culture; for although they mutually aid each other, they are quite different in scope. The first tends to form the heart and to accustom the will to follow the dictates of reason, by conquering any natural vicious inclinations; in a word, it aims to make a man good, honest, virtuous, social and civilized. The second aims to increase the number of useful arts, to enrich the intelligence and to broaden the field of the material activities. Through her clergy the Catholic Church has as its principal office to teach religious truth and to educate the will; and thus to civilize and perfect the morality of the world. The Church has never attributed to herself the exclusive mission of teaching the natural sciences, though it has frequently taught them, either as a means to strengthen good morals or because there was no one else able to carry on such work, especially in those

places where the State was disturbed by wars or civil dissensions. The progress of science is a thing which belongs to the whole social body; and it is unreasonable to hold the Church responsible for the lack of advance in this regard, since that is not the principal aim of her activities. In this study, therefore, our attention is drawn not to the moral education of the Mexican people (though whatever education exists to-day in Mexico is due to the Church and to the clergy), but more particularly to the intellectual education which, although not the exclusive mission of the Church, has been nevertheless imparted by her with so much zeal and with such a liberal hand that without her aid Mexican culture would be reduced to a negligible quantity. Up to our own time, three distinct epochs in the public instruction of Mexico may be distinguished. The first extends from the time of the Conquest down to the year 1767; the second, from the expulsion of the Society of Jesus to the fall of the Empire in 1867; and the third, from 1867 to the Revolution of Madero. The first may be characterized as an age of uninterrupted progress and prosperity; the second, as a period of general decline and of fruitless effort; and the third, as a time of reorganization, with a tendency on the part of the government to monopolize and secularize all instruction, and a tendency on the part of Catholics to give it a more liberal Catholic character.

### I. THE COLONIAL EPOCH, 1525-1767.

Mexico is not, like the United States, a nation imported from Europe. It is a new native nationality mingled with a third part Spanish and which, little by little, has been transformed by contact with the blood, the religion, the customs, and the scientific culture of Europe. To apply to the Mexican people, therefore, the same laws of evolution as prevail in the United States would be a contradiction, an injustice. In less than two centuries after the Conquest, the entire aboriginal population from New Mexico to Guatemala was completely civilized. It became Christian and it was organized on civic lines by Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits and secular priests—a great number of whom laid down their lives in this cause. The incredible exertions of these indefatigable mission-

aries in learning the native languages, in writing books in these languages, with which to tame the savagery of the Indians and to perform their customs, are triumphs which have lain forgotten in chronicles, waiting for the hand which will do them justice by manifesting them to the world. The entire population of the country in this first epoch knew perfectly the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and the basic laws of Christian morality. Honesty, respect for authority, abhorrence of theft, marital fidelity, hospitality, sociability of a refined order, and urbanity were common virtues which were characteristic of the Mexican people even after long years of revolution and official irreligion. There were, of course, errors and abuses, as there always have been in all European colonies; but there they were lessened to a great degree by public morality, fraternal union of the races, and by religious unity. In a country so pacified and moralized, the progress of scientific work would have increased continually, if political and religious dissensions had not intervened. Once the country had been won to the Catholic faith, the clergy endeavored to diffuse instruction and to raise the colony to the intellectual level of Europe—and they succeeded in doing it.

Primary schools were established for the children of the *caciques* and Spaniards in all the monasteries where the friars had a permanent residence. The first school established was that of San Francisco el Grande in Mexico City, by Brother Pedro de Gante, shortly after his arrival in 1523. He succeeded in bringing almost one thousand children to the school, where they were taught Christian doctrine, music, singing, literature, the mechanical arts, reading and writing. Some of these children studied Latin and the higher branches. Up to the year 1658, the Franciscans had established fifty-two monasteries and about one hundred and forty-eight smaller residences. The other religious orders did the same wherever they were established. Among the most renowned colleges were: the Franciscan College of Tlaltelolco (1534), and the Jesuit Colleges of San Gregorio, of Mexico City, San Javier of Puebla, San Martin of Tepotzotlan, and the schools at Patzcuaro, Parras, San Luis de la Paz, and Sinaloa. From 1525, the education of girls was begun by the Teresian Sisters and continued by the

Franciscan Sisters of the Third Order, in most of the eighty-five other religious convents founded in Mexico. There were also an Academy for Indian girls, an Asylum for the *mestizos*, which was founded by the Viceroy Mendoza, and the famous College of Niñas and of Vizcainas, the endowment of which still remains intact. According to the customs of the time, the young women were educated preferably for domestic life.

Up to the coming of the Jesuits, there was no College in Mexico for the secondary education of the creoles, the only exception being the school of San Juan de Letran, in which Latin was taught, especially to the *mestizos*. The establishment, in 1573, of the College which received the name of the Royal and Most Ancient College of San Pedro, San Pablo, and San Ildefonso, was an important event in the educational history of the country. There the scholars who honored Mexico for more than two hundred years received their education, as one may see in the bibliographies which exist on this subject and in the book *Alumnos distinguidos de San Ildefonso*, written by Dr. Felix Osores. Like the Capital, all other cities of any importance wished to enjoy the advantages of this secondary education, which was given almost exclusively by the Jesuits. There appeared one after the other, therefore, the College of Espiritu Santo in Puebla (with the schools of San Jeronimo and San Ignacio); of San Javier of Valladolid (Morelia); Santo Tomas (with the school of San Juan), in Guadalajara; Zacatecas (with the school of San Luis); Oaxaca; Queretaro (with its school); Merida, Campeche, San Luis Potosi, Chihuahua, El Parral, Guanajuato, Veracruz, La Habana, and Guatemala; and the Seminaries of Durango and Chiapas. The rest of the towns did not then have a sufficient number of lay students, creoles, or *mestizos*, to warrant the erection of a College. By introducing into the country their programme of studies (*Ratio Studiorum*), which had been drawn up by a large number of learned men in Europe on the plan of the most flourishing University of the times—that of Paris, the Jesuits contributed in a potent way to the intellectual development of Mexico. Their programme of studies had the immense advantage of determining clearly the end to which secondary education tended, and of descending to all the necessary details in order to obtain that

end. It was based upon Christian religious and moral teaching, and upon classic Greek, Latin and Spanish culture. This literary movement, which was instituted in the Jesuit colleges, was greatly aided by Houses of Studies which the different religious Orders had for their own students, and by the Seminaries of the secular clergy. Mention may be made of the Colleges of San Pablo of Mexico City, directed by the Augustinians (1575); St. Pedro and St. Pablo of Mexico City, and San Ildefonso of Puebla, directed by the Jesuits; Regina-Coeli of Mexico City and San Luis of Puebla, directed by the Dominicans; the celebrated Colleges of the Franciscans, Santa Cruz of Queretaro (1682), Guadalupe at Zacatecas (1707), San Fernando at Mexico City (1734) for missionaries, and especially the Seminaries of the secular clergy, such as that of San Nicolas in Morelia, that of Mexico City, the Palafoxiano of Puebla (founded about the middle of the seventeenth century), that of Guadalajara (1699), and many others which produced renowned scholars.

Higher studies were also given in some of these Colleges which have been mentioned already, in the Seminaries, and especially in the University of Mexico, which had been founded in 1551, with all the rights and privileges of the University of Salamanca. It had a library of 10,000 volumes which was thrown open to the public morning and evening. Besides the University studies, courses were established there in the Mexican dialects, in medicine, and in botany. Charles III. opened the Academy of Beaux Arts of San Carlos. The Universities of Yucatan and of Guatemala were also established by the Jesuits. That of Guadalajara was founded in 1778. The professors of the secondary schools, as well as those of the Universities, generally came from Europe. Tuition was entirely free, and, on account of the endowments they enjoyed, was not dependent upon contributions.

The fruit produced by the system of study followed in the Jesuit Colleges and the Universities may be seen in the bibliographies of Icazbalceta, Andrade and Nicolas de Leon. One thing is worthy of notice: the Mexicans of the eighteenth century prided themselves on being able to vie with European savants, who were the glory of the universities of the Old World; and the Mexican Jesuits in

their knowledge of Latin, philosophy, theology, law and the natural sciences rivalled not only the most learned men of Spain, but also those of Rome and Bologna. From what has been said thus far, we can see how much credit is to be given to the criticisms we hear so often on the obscurantism of this period; one needs only to remember that in less than two centuries Mexico, although composed of so many nationalities and of savage tribes, and with a population of not more than 5,000,000, three-fourths of whom were Indians or *mestizos*, produced a wonderful variety of literary treasures and a great number of educated men. On the twenty-fifth of June, 1767, with the expulsion and exile of the Jesuits, public instruction entered into a new period which presents a completely distinct aspect.

## II. FROM THE EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS TO THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE OF MAXIMILIAN (1767-1867).

This period of educational decline and moral decadence was disturbed by four different wars—the war of Mexican Independence, the Civil War, the War with the United States, and the French intervention, this last being the most disastrous of all. During this period, scarcely any educational progress was possible on account of the scantiness of resources and the impossibility of entering into the literary movement which was transforming Europe; for there was a war *à l'outrance* being waged against the existing religious Orders and the clergy. The harsh suppression of the Society of Jesus, of most of its institutions of learning, and of its Missions were evils of transcendent magnitude to the social, moral, and intellectual development of the country. All the States of the North, including New Mexico, were reduced to an order bordering on barbarism. The greater part of them remained in that state until the opening of the country by the railroads. The secular clergy and the friars were not numerous enough to take the place of the Jesuits in the Missions. They lacked the necessary preparation for the work, and they were ignorant of the languages of the natives of these States. Moreover, the religious Orders were composed chiefly of men who had been educated in the Colleges of the Jesuits, and after the Suppression they

were forced to extend their sphere of action by substituting for those who had been exiled from the Missions, persons without education and sometimes without vocation. Deprived of the stimulus and competition of one Order whose activity was well known, they, as well as the secular clergy, neglected educational work and busied themselves in the administration of their *haciendas*, giving an abortive birth to those clerical pedants and apostates who humiliated the Mexican Church at the beginning of the period of Independence. Mexican society, although diseased at heart by the lack of moral and intellectual education of her youth, continued for some years to make progress, as long as the generation formed by the Jesuits lasted; but it began at last to decay rapidly after the reign of the Viceroy Conde de Revillagigedo, a disciple of the Jesuits and the first to vindicate the honor of his teachers and to resuscitate their literary and religious successes.

The University of Mexico City continued to maintain its zeal for serious study as best it could during these wars. In one of its chairs, and for many years as its Rector, was the most eminent jurist then in Mexico, Father Basilio Manuel Arrillaga, who was consulted as the leading legal authority and was a firm supporter of science and orthodox doctrine. The Jacobin, Vincente Gomez Farias, with the design of completely excluding from public teaching the clergy, the learned men, and ecclesiastical sciences, succeeded in suppressing the University in 1833; but the Conservative party restored it again in 1834, modifying certain of its statutes. General Comonfort suppressed it again in 1857, but it was reopened by Zuloaga on May 5, 1858. Juarez closed it on January 23, 1861, but it was reopened under the Regency and remained open until it came to an end definitely at the hands of Maximilian and his liberal ministers, November 30, 1865.

The great problem, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, was to find teachers to take their places in the education of youth. The Royal Decree of October 5, 1767 (inspired by the secularizing work of the French philosophers), which introduced secular teachers in the chairs of literature in the former Jesuit colleges, and that of August 14, 1768, which excluded all members of the religious Orders from the Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities, aggravated the educational disorder of the country. It

was almost impossible at the time to find the necessary professors and instructors, and many of these institutions were forced to close their doors, with great subsequent detriment to the provinces far from the Capital. In the more populous cities they were able to form a body of professors from among the old disciples, and these tried to keep alive the spirit and the literary traditions of the Jesuits, under the immediate direction of the Government. Such is the origin of the greater number of those civil institutions which even to-day are housed in the old Colleges once belonging to the Jesuits.

During the century under consideration all these centers of education fell into decay until they were almost reduced to a shadow of what they had been formerly. This is a very serious thing to say, but it can be substantiated by most conclusive proofs from the letters of the Directors of the institutions which succeeded those of the Jesuits up to the time of Maximilian. It will suffice to mention the Marquis de Castañiza, who was Rector of the College of San Ildefonso during a period of more than forty years, and his own testimony in regard to the decay of public education in Durango where he was Bishop. There are letters about the Collegio Carolino of Puebla and the bad state of education from 1767 to 1845 from Dr. Luis de Mendizabal and from Father Luis Gutierrez del Corral, who was Rector of the same, showing the evil effects of governmental supervision. Of that of Guadalajara, we have similar testimony from Dr. Francisco de Velasco, who was University teacher for twenty years. On the College of Queretaro, we have the testimony of the Congress of the same State of the year 1849. In Chiapas, Yucatan, Oaxaca, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosi, Veracruz, and in other cities, educational facilities were reduced almost to a minimum owing to incompetent directors. It seems a fallacy, and yet it is true, that in these calamitous times from 1810 to 1867, when religious and scientific education were calumniated, impoverished and destroyed, the men with the best liberal and scientific training were educated in the Seminaries of Mexico City, of Puebla, of Guadalajara and Morelia, where Latin, classical literature, civil and Roman law, classical philosophy and moral theology were taught in spite of the intellectual decadence which had settled on Mexico. These



institutions indeed saved Mexico from utter barbarism. Their studies were still considered legal by the government; and up to that date noble lawyers and distinguished men of letters are to be found, who began their studies in these colleges and who flourished in greater number and with a far superior education than those educated in the badly organized civil institutions, where the personnel was being changed with every change of government. Thanks to the Seminaries the newborn Republic preserved her flourishing spirit during the years of religious peace which preceded the reform. The University continued to spread its light; the National Library and the National Museum, the Academy of Language, and the Academy of History were founded and organized then (1835), and at this time also was completed that monumental work, the *Diccionario Universal de Historia y de Geografia*.

The question rises quite naturally: Why did not the clergy do more during this period in behalf of education? Simply because they were not allowed to do so, on account of the constant war waged against them by the Liberal party. With great tenacity, the Liberal party prevented all attempts at any educational reorganization of the Jesuit Colleges. We need only to mention the suppression of the College of San Ildefonso in Mexico City in 1821, and again in 1865 by Maximilian; that of San Gregorio by Comonfort and the Congress of 1856; of the Carolino of Puebla in 1821, and of the Seminary of San Camilo in Mexico City in 1873. The only aspect of educational work which continued to make progress, was elementary teaching which continued spreading all over the country, by means of private schools, or because their personnel was sustained by all the partizans.

### III. FROM JUAREZ TO MADERO (1867-1912).

Besides the wars in Mexico, one of the greatest obstacles to the generalization and the solidity of education was the sectarianism of the Liberal party, which spread atheistical doctrines by weakening the Catholic party and by strengthening its own political fortunes. It waged a constant opposition to any kind of teaching not its own. This party, which came boldly into power by the force of arms and not by the popular vote, has always remained

a small minority, but in no other phase of activity has it shown a more determined attitude than in its systematic destruction of Catholic institutions. It has deliberately kept the people in religious ignorance in order to strengthen its monopoly of teaching and to impose its own dogmas on the great mass of the population. Among the first to introduce atheism into this official education (though not radically) was Gomez Farias with his Decrees of October 19 and 24, 1833, which completely excluded the clergy from teaching, suppressed the University, and established a uniform regulation of public instruction. On account of the wars, this system did not begin to take shape until after 1885, when Porfirio Diaz ruled the destinies of the country, and especially after the first National Congress of Public Instruction, opened (December 1, 1889), by the Secretary, D. Joaquin Baranda, and his successor, D. Justo Sierra. Since that time, all men of good will, whether Liberals or not, have tried to spread primary State education; though on account of the lack of resources and of professors, they could scarcely establish half the schools necessary for the instruction of the public.

For that reason, Diaz freely accepted the help of the Catholics and of the religious of both sexes; and thanks to this better spirit, the number of public primary schools was raised from about 4,000 to 42,000. The government also established colleges of secondary education in the Capitals of all the States and in other towns of relative importance. The number of these preparatory schools, considering the state of primary teaching and the help of the free colleges, almost sufficed for the number of the students who desired to follow their curriculum. There was no official University and no titles of Doctor given in any of the sciences—mathematics, philosophy, or literature. Each State had its own normal schools for law, engineering and medicine; but these were often weakened on account of the lack of the necessary means. In Mexico City there were Academies of letters and superior studies, and of archaeology, history, etc. If in some way we congratulate the government for the extension and the organization of public education and for the interest it showed in spreading the study of the natural sciences, especially in the Capital and in the secondary schools, Cath-

olic educators and their spiritual leaders who are truly patriots of broad mind, cannot but recognize the grievous defects therein, and cannot but make the official interference responsible for the moral, intellectual, material and political destruction which has fallen upon this rich country. Moreover, this neutral teaching (sectarian and positivistic as it was) was a military imposition of one party contrary to the will and the belief of almost all the people; and it was founded on a gross ignorance of Catholic doctrines. This liberal teaching, by eliminating religion and the basic elements of all morality, and by neglecting completely the moral education and the strengthening of the will in the hearts of the children, opened a broad way to the depraving of their instincts. This liberal education was the weapon one political party used to triumph over the power of its opponents and to give employment to its parties who came to power.

It was the instrument of philosophical sectarianism which destroyed Catholic belief, by pretending to centralize the country around this liberal idea, by introducing in the place of Catholic doctrine the positivistic doctrines of Comte, and consequently naturalism and materialism. It was a spirit which atrophied the Mexican mind. It robbed education of higher learning, of the eternal and immovable principles of justice, of idealism, of the spirituality of the soul, of liberty, of the historical and scientific value of all revealed religion, and even of all natural religion. It atrophied the imagination and the spirit of youth with premature and almost exclusive study of the material and mathematical sciences. It dried up the fountain of all literary studies, suppressing the teaching of languages and ancient classic authors and reducing to a minimum the study of the national language. It made constant and silent war upon those Catholic institutions which could in any way compete with its schools.

Let us pause a little upon this last point. Though the Constitution of 1857 allowed freedom of education, so many restrictions were placed upon the Free Schools that they could scarcely develop or bear the fruit of which they were certainly capable. For motives which are apparent, Catholic teachers had to be brought from foreign countries. The anti-Catholic Laws of Reform which Don Porfirio Diaz attempted to deal in a tolerant spirit with

the whole country, left notwithstanding the teaching bodies of the religious instructors in an abnormal condition. After the triumph of the Liberal party, there was a complete exclusion of all Catholic teachers from the educational field; and although later on some of them were admitted, they were never allowed to occupy directive positions or chairs of any importance, as, for instance, of history, philosophy, or ethics. Indirectly the programmes of the preparatory schools of Mexico City were imposed on all the States and even on the Free Schools.

The validity of the studies made in the free colleges was never officially recognized, nor did the Government even consent to send official examiners to them (except in Guadalajara). These schools were obliged, if they wanted to have students, to renounce their own classical programmes and adopt those of the Government, and to send their students privately to be examined in the official schools. The State went so far as to follow the suicidal measure of making the examinations of the students of the official schools as easy as possible, and even of approving them without any examination, it being sufficient that they should have attended a certain number of classes in the Government institutions. The alumni of the Free Schools, however, were required to make three *muy bien* marks before they were simply approved. Such was the freedom of education in the times of Justo Sierra and of his Secretary, Ecequiel Chavez.

The sad consequences of Liberal education are shown by the small number of men of letters to-day which it has produced. The ever-widening division among the educated classes into every kind of erroneous system of social revolution is evidenced in the writings published by the Ministers of Instruction, Vasquez Gomez and Nemesio Naranjo. We refer the reader to these writings because, as the work of Liberals, they have incontestable authority.

The Catholics were careful to preserve their own religious training as well as their literary and classical traditions without neglecting the brilliant scientific work they had done in the past; and they tried to establish institutions where they could gather and raise up their children along the highest moral and intellectual lines. Almost immediately after the death of Maximilian, the Catholic So-

cieties spread primary Free Schools all through the country. After a few tentative attempts in Mexico City, the Jesuit Fathers founded the Catholic College of Puebla (1870) and the no less famous College of San Juan Nepomucene of Saltillo (1878), which were superior during many years to those of the government on account of their scientific instruction and their literary successes. After them came the Scientific Institute of Mexico City (1896), that of San José of Guadalajara (1906), which gave to the country (even in spite of having been subjected to governmental interference) an instruction superior to that of many similar institutions in Europe and even in the United States. In these last years, other religious Orders and the secular clergy founded a great number of institutions for secondary teaching, for commerce, arts and trades; and primary schools were established in the European fashion with acknowledged success. Among these may be mentioned the Schools of the Christian Brothers and of the Marist Brothers, those of the Salesians, who had their Schools of the arts and commerce in Mexico City, in Puebla, Guadalajara, Monterey, and in Morelia; and the Catholic Normal Schools of Puebla and of Guadalajara, which were directed by laymen.

All the Seminaries of the country had been already formed on the plan of studies used in the Gregorian University at Rome; they also modelled their curricula of studies and discipline, their religious and clerical education, under the inspiration of professors or directors who had been educated in Europe. In many of these Seminaries were teachers thoroughly acquainted with the social and intellectual movement of Europe, who gave lectures on Catholic social action, thus initiating among the clergy a real campaign in favor of the working class. The Seminaries of Mexico City and of Puebla had been turned into Universities, and the latter one gave university courses even for laymen. In Guadalajara, there was a Catholic school of law as a preparation for the establishment in the near future of a University there. In Mexico City an Academy of higher studies of medicine and of sociology were about to be established.

The education of women of all classes was perhaps the one to which most attention was given all over Mexico.

The Presidents, Manuel Gonzalez and Porfirio Diaz, brought over from France the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, in whose Colleges of Guanajuato, Mexico City, San Luis Potosi, Guadalajara and Monterrey, young girls were being educated in the sciences, social customs, and domestic occupations, with as much perfection as in the most civilized nations. In this work the Carmelite Sisters, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, and many others, were occupied in the higher branches of education as well as in the elementary schools, asylums, day nurseries, reformatories, etc.

Probably from 4,000 to 6,000 Catholic Colleges were in existence in Mexico, where the rising generation were being taught their civic, moral and religious duties; and their graduates were spreading over the country a social, intellectual and scientific culture with a success which the official institutions never succeeded in reaching.

All these establishments of virtue and learning have been demolished by the vandalism of the past four years. Their libraries and scientific laboratories, their museums, their works of art, and their educational equipment have been destroyed through the rapacity of the soldiers. Their professors have been imprisoned, robbed, or sent into exile, and their teaching absolutely forbidden. No one can say that this has been done to spread culture or learning or virtue; and in consequence the civilization of Mexico has now reached the low level with which it began in the earliest days of the Conquest.

## **The Catholic Church and Education in Mexico**

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**A** FAVORITE opening for a writer or a speaker is to imitate the stately beginning of the Declaration of Independence by a sentence something like this: "There are some truths self-evident and incontrovertible." But I never knew any writer or speaker to begin by saying: There are some lies self-evident and incontrovertible. I

am willing to an exception and start that way. Why? It is not, I assure you, because I want to be different. As a matter of fact what I am going to say will be "different" enough to most people because they have been accepting the opposite as the truth. It is because I want to be exact. If you tell a stubborn, blind man that the Woolworth Building is round often enough, and warn him that it is to the interest of some people to make him think that it is square, he has a lie fastened in his mind with all the strength of truth. It is self-evident to you that it is a lie but by him it is accepted as the truth and it is incontrovertible because he will have it so.

One of these self-evident and practically incontrovertible lies is that the Catholic Church hates popular education. A list of the great universities she founded, the facts about her preservation of the classics and the Scriptures, the long line of her educational works that reach back through the pages of history—all these should nail the lie. But the facts are well fastened on the popular mind, which considers facts less than gossip, and truth less than rumor masquerading in its shining garments.

A great citadel is always surrounded by entrenchments or small but effective forts miles out from the center. The truth is surrounded likewise by such entrenchments or forts. I shall try to use them on this Mexican question before I open up the guns of the citadel itself. The first outpost is in our own California.

The clergy who planted Christianity in Mexico sent the Padres to California. The Superiors who directed them in California lived in Mexico. All the Padres came through Mexico. It may be deduced from these facts that what they did in California was only an expansion of the work they did in Mexico. Junipero Serra himself was a missionary in Mexico before he went to California. There are memories of him in Queretaro. Of his work in California, George Wharton James says: "It was nothing less than marvelous." The Missions he and his brethren built are, according to Charles E. Chapman, "the corner stone of California art, literature, and sentiment." Hubert H. Bancroft testifies of them that, "Thousands were brought into the fold, taught morality, industry, and the arts of healing." Charles F. Lummis speaks thus of them and their work in California and Mexico: "Our parti-

san histories, even our encyclopedias, are either strangely silent or strangely biased. They do not seem to recognize the precedence of Spain, nor the fact that she made, in America, a record of heroism, of unparalleled exploration and colonization never approached by any other nation anywhere."

California, then under Spanish rule, was but a part of the Spanish Mission field in America. We do not hear in California that the Padres tried to prevent the Indians from receiving an education. We know that they did the opposite. The remains of their schools are there to speak for them. But California was the territory most distant from the center of their work. If they did so much at a distance, what must they have done where they were under the watchful eyes of their Superiors and the Viceroy's?

Another of the encircling forts for this inquiry is found in the ruins of educational institutions in Mexico and in the buildings once used as schools but now changed to other purposes. They are everywhere below the Rio Grande. Those standing and still in use are now prisons, barracks, lunatic asylums, tenements, private houses, etc., etc., as well as public schools. Those in ruins are—just ruins. There is scarcely a *new* school building of any size in Mexico to-day. Nearly all the schools in the cities were built by the Catholic missionaries. But these schools of the missionaries are not all used for their original purposes, and every one converted to other use means a school less than Mexico once had. The story of the contribution of the Catholic Church to popular education is written then in Mexico itself as well as in California and written in the buildings erected to promote it.

These churches and school buildings show the culture of their builders and of those who traced the beautiful lines of their ornamentation. In that fact we have another of the small forts. Mexico has architectural monuments far ahead of those that we possess, some of them in small places where one would scarcely look for them. They were built, for the most part, by native Mexicans under the direction of the missionaries. Ask the average American worker in stone to produce the delicate tracery of some of the wonderful façades. He is a master workman, indeed, if he can approach such perfection. Yet he has



had the advantage of centuries of progress and education. Could these Mexican workers showing taste and refinement as well as skill have been of a neglected and ignorant race, left without education by the Catholic missionaries to the Indians of the New World?

From the Mexican of to-day a few deductions may be drawn. He is still an Indian and he forms eighty-five per cent of the population of the country. He has his faults, but he has also his virtues. He has produced, and is still producing, distinguished men in every walk of life. He has written learned books, improved machinery by inventions, shone as an orator, excelled in statecraft, painted beautifully as an artist or carved elegantly as a sculptor. He has been an editor, a teacher, a philosopher, a theologian, a linguist, and a thousand other things. Everywhere and always, when he is allowed, he shows by his politeness and consideration the marks and breeding of a gentleman. Are these an inheritance from the Aztec cannibal whose cruelty reached the highest mark in the history of the savage world? Admittedly he has not had a chance since the Spaniards left. Surely this Indian, who has resisted so long the blighting effects of the ignorance to which the last century with its revolutions condemned him, has had a more than ordinarily solid foundation of instruction and culture for a race redeemed from such a state of barbarism as its history records.

But I cannot keep any longer amongst the outposts without forgetting the citadel altogether. Before I enter it, however, I wish to make one plain statement, to make it boldly, and to stand ready to defend it: In the history of the spread of Christianity there are many chapters of success; but there are none so full of devotion and self-sacrifice, so full of progress for civilization under difficult conditions, as the chapter that tells the story of the Christian conquest of Mexico.

In 1572 there died one of the three Franciscan Friars who came to Mexico two years after the Conquest. One had perished long before of starvation in Honduras. Another died a short time after his arrival. Friar Pedro de Gante survived to write the first chapter of the educational efforts of the Catholic Church for the Mexican Indian. He came in 1523 and died in 1572, eighty years old. I take from Icazbalceta's *Bibliografia Mexicana del Siglo*

XVI., p. 37, the following testimonial to the work of this great man and his companions:

"The task was tremendously difficult because the means were entirely disproportionate to the ends. They were confronted not with the education of the children as they arrived successively at the proper age, as in our day, but with an entire and numerous generation, big and little, men and women, who all at once were in urgent need of religious and civil instruction from the very foundations, and without knowing even the language of their teachers. The friars were few and, realizing that if they attempted everything they would accomplish nothing, they decided to divide their time between the conversion of the adults and the education of the children; endeavoring thus to take care of the emergency, leading the adults from their errors, and giving the children, who were docile and not yet imbued with the old beliefs, the new religion with their education. They counted, moreover, that once the little ones were instructed in the faith they would serve to bring in their elders; and they were not deceived in their hopes."

Then the following from the same source, p. 38:

"The schools were generally low halls with dormitories and other rooms adjoining. There were schools in all the principal convents, and so large that some of them held 800 to 1,000 pupils. The most famous of all was that of Mexico, founded by Friar Pedro de Gante. As customary, it was behind the Convent church extending toward the north . . . . In this school there were soon gathered a thousand Indians. In the morning they were given lessons in reading, writing and singing, and in the afternoon were given religious instruction. . . . From the more advanced and intelligent, Friar Pedro selected fifty to be catechists who were given special care and intensive training during the week in what they were to preach the following Sunday. On that they were sent out in pairs to the towns about Mexico where they preached the Gospel."

More missionaries and teachers arrived at the request of Cortes to the King. They also had their troubles, for they began to preach against slavery. Nevertheless they succeeded. In 1723 there were 2,396 missionaries of three orders in the field. Attached to each monastery was a school. Friar Sahagun began the work of higher educa-

tion by establishing the College of Santa Cruz. He was laughed at but he persevered. He even organized a faculty of Indian professors and put the management of the school in Indian hands, but the Friars had to take it over and reorganize it. Nevertheless, in 1541, an alarmed Spaniard named Lopez wrote to the King objecting to the Friars teaching the Indians. He complained that they had taught large numbers to read and write and that they were such excellent penmen that "it is a marvel to see them," and that, "there are so many and such good scriveners" that he "could not count them"; that they taught Latin so well that the children "speak it like another Cicero, and every day the number grows." (*Collection de documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, Vol. II., p. 146.)

But Lopez found a poor listener in the King who later said through his wonderful Laws of the Indies: "Where possible schools must be established to teach them (the Indians) to read and write Spanish and at no cost to them." By the way, it was these Laws of the Indies that are referred to by Charles F. Lummis when he wrote, that they formed "the highest minded, most complete and most noble Indian policy ever framed by man." (*Spanish Pioneers*.) The Church was in accord with the spirit of the Laws and ordered (III Provincial Council of Mexico) that every pastor "must procure with all diligence the establishment of schools in their towns."

Of the first Archbishop of Mexico, General Palacio wrote that he, Zumarraga, was "an indefatigable worker in charity and education." He was all of that, for he founded hospitals and established schools for native boys and girls. He was "the editor of many important works for the education of the Indians." (*Atravez de los Sipos*, Vol. II., p. 354.) It was he who brought the first printing press to this continent and from it issued the first American printed books. An extract from a letter of Archbishop Zumarraga to the King, dated December 30, 1537, will show something of his zeal for the education of the Indian: "That which occupies my thoughts; to which my will is most inclined and my small forces strive, is that in this City and in every diocese there shall be a college for Indian boys learning grammar at least, and a great establishment with room for a large number of the daughters of the Indians." . . .

The story shows to the credit of the missionaries and their successors as the years go by. What has the Catholic Church done for education in Mexico? Everything that could be done till her hands were manacled and her voice gagged by plunder and persecution.

Contrast the work of the Spaniards in Mexico with that of other discoverers and colonizers and the truth will be plain. They preserved the native races and did marvels to civilize them while others only transplanted their European civilization to a soil from which the natives had been driven. The art and literature of Mexico is the art and literature, not of the Spaniard, but of the Mexican. The nationalism of Mexico is not Spanish but that of the soil. It turned against its parent but it was there. It may show little gratitude but its very existence is the clearest acknowledgment of its debt. But what was the power that moved Spain to such a line of Christian conquest? The power that, through the voices of her Bishops, fought for the rights of the Indians, for their preservation and for their education—the Church. Without the Church Mexico might to-day be a white man's country, rival to our own, and with a white's man civilization. But that would have to come about at the price of extermination; and races, like individuals, have the right to live. It becomes us badly to cast stones—we who won at the expense of the death of our aborigines. Mexico's growth in civilization was stopped by the Napoleonic wars that weakened Spain, and then declined to what it is to-day. Atheism and rebellion were the destroyers. If the story of the educational work of the Church may be read even in the ruins of Mexico's schools, these ruins are also silent witnesses that reproach those responsible for one of the greatest and most awful catastrophes in the history of civilization.

Sadly the spirit of the Catholic missionary hovers over the land for which he lived and died. He sees his schools in ruins and his colleges perverted to the teachings of hate, his monasteries destroyed and his brethren scattered, his churches despoiled and sequestered. But the faith he preached and the love he implanted are not dead. Mexico's dark day of trial has been long and full of bitterness, but the hope of a new dawning lives in a faith unbroken and a love unforgotten.